

July 3, 2009

California Energy Commission
Attn: Clare Laufenburg Gallardo
1516 Ninth Street, MS 46
Sacramento, CA 95814

By Email to: claufenb@energy.state.ca.us
Re: Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative Phase 2A Report

Dear Ms. Laufenburg Gallardo:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the RETI process.

Since the transmission plan presented in the RETI Draft 2A Report is “conceptual,” it would have been better to map only straight-line segments (obviously only conceptual) rather than the “faux realistic” segments, if you will, that actually appear on the map published by the CEC on June 17, 2009, entitled “Existing Transmission Line System & Draft Proposed Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative Projects.”

For example, the Midway-Gregg lines one and two siting as represented on the map clearly could never be built. While towns, cities, and most place names are left off the map, anyone familiar with the geography of the area can see that, if built, the lines would pass very close to Selma, California in south-central Fresno County. Then the lines go directly north to what is almost certainly the McCall Substation, which oddly—like many substations on the map—is unnamed. From there the lines take a northwest turn and pass through southeast, south, and west Fresno, then following Highway 99 to the Gregg Substation.

While the Gregg Substation probably offers the best point to tie into the foundation line through Central California (assuming that a highly centralized solution is the best means to meet the RPS goals), it is more than blatantly obvious that a plan siting a 500 kilovolt (or possibly a 765 kV) DCTL through densely populated urban and suburban areas would never be approved.

It is impossible to get into the minds of the planners who designed and published this map. Nevertheless, one can't help asking why planners included so little geographic detail in the map. Why didn't they include cities, towns, place names and the names of the substations along the routes?

If the Midway-Gregg segments are representative of the map and the process as a whole, I can't help but say that the process is seriously flawed.

Like the map, the 2A Report appendix entitled “RETI PHASE 2A TRANSMISSION LINE SEGMENT ANALYSIS” (which is the basis of the map) seems critically flawed. It could have been much more meaningful if it had included in the long list of environmental criteria in the matrix something like “crosses densely populated areas.” With this simple addition, the lines could have been drawn much

more realistically and provided an infinitely more meaningful map with line segments approximating what hopefully will come out in Phase 3.

Thank you,
Charles M. "Chip" Ashley
Save the Foothills Coalition